

UNDERHILL PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, December 7, 2017 6:30 PM

Minutes

Planning Commissioners Present: Chair C. Seybolt, David Edson, Johnathan Drew, Carolyn Gregson, Nancy Bergersen, Pat Lamphere

Staff/Municipal Representatives Present: Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

Others Present: None

[6:25] The Planning Commission convened at Underhill Town Hall at 6:25pm.

[6:31] Chair Seybolt called the meeting to order.

[6:32] No public comment was provided. **Chair C. Seybolt requested a motion to switch agenda items “New Business & Old Business.”** Commissioner Bergersen made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Drew. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

[6:34] Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to approve the minutes of October 7, 2017. **Commissioner Lamphere made a motion to approve the minutes of October 7, 2017**, which was seconded by Commissioner Bergersen. **The motion was approved unanimously.** The minutes of October 19, 2017; November 2, 2017; and November 7, 2017 could not be approved because a quorum from those meetings were not present at the evening’s meeting.

[6:35] Staff Member Strniste recapped the Selectboard’s Public Hearing that was held that previous Tuesday, December 5, 2017. Commissioner Drew recommended that a slide in the PowerPoint presentation pertaining to the advantages of the new district should be revised. Commissioner Drew will supply Staff Member Strniste updated language for that slide prior to the Selectboard’s next public hearing. Chair C. Seybolt recommended to the Commission that they should hold two informational meetings leading up to Town Meeting Day to re-inform the public of what the Planning Commission is proposing. A brief discussion ensued about what materials could be visible at public voting areas when the ballot becomes available. Commissioner Edson advised that he wanted clarification on the issue.

[6:45] A discussion ensued about the square footage requirement that the Planning Commission is proposing for two-family dwellings. The Planning Commission never intended two-family dwellings to be restricted in square footage, where both dwellings have to be over 30% of the total square footage of the structure. Therefore, the Planning Commission recommended a clarification edit where the text in the chart becomes no square footage requirement. Staff Member Strniste explained that the rationale of the >30% regulation was to explain to the public that any accessory dwelling greater than 30% would become a two-family dwelling; however, the intent was not to limit and/or restrict two-family dwellings. In addition, the Commission proposed adding the phrase “exceptions under” to the chart for the owner occupancy requirement for detached accessory dwellings.

[6:58] Staff Member Strniste informed the Board that there will be two ballot items during Town Meeting Day. He then advised that Town Clerk, Sherri Morin would attend one of the Commission’s meetings in January or February to discuss what can and cannot be done at Town Meeting Day. Chair C. Seybolt advised that the Commission should develop a publicity plan for January and February. She suggested that the Commission speak to those voicing concerns at the Planning Commission’s public hearings, as well as talking to the general public regularly.

- [7:12] Staff Member Strniste provided the Commission his reaction to the joint meeting with the Town of Jericho, and explained that he felt that Jericho is able to be more progressive with their zoning because the process is different from Underhill's. Specifically, zoning regulation updates in Jericho can be approved by the Selectboard, whereas the zoning regulations in Underhill have to be approved by a town vote. Commissioner Lamphere opined that Jericho is a different environment, where they have intentionally selected to have greater density. On the other hand, Underhill has a history of preferring rural/less density. Commissioner Edson opined that the Town of Jericho's zoning regulations seem to be more intrusive, specifically referencing the prime habitat areas. Chair C. Seybolt opined that she felt the last area to be proactive in the Underhill Flats Center Village District is Phil Jacob's property, where there could potentially be some sort of small scale, useful development. Staff Member Strniste advised that the Development Review Board could require a master plan the next time he were to subdivide. Chair C. Seybolt recommended meeting with the Development Review Board to get their opinion on the situation, as well as talking to Phil Jacobs. Commissioner Lamphere advised that the Commission should be strategizing how to convert some of the residential development into small scale mixed-uses or commercial uses. Staff Member Strniste recommended re-examining the use table to see what could be changed, and possibly adding new uses such as small scale commercial that could be permitted uses.
- [7:27] Chair C. Seybolt asked the Board if they felt like they had enough reason to meet with the Development Review Board. Commissioner Lamphere advised that he would not mind obtaining problems that the Board is having in smaller doses than what occurred before. Staff Member Strniste advised that the best time to meet would be in early January due to the Board's winter schedule. Chair C. Seybolt asked the Commission how they would like to proceed with the Jericho Planning Commission. Commissioner Edson opined that they should work with them in the Flats area, and Commissioner Drew agreed staying in touch with them would be valuable.
- [7:31] The Commission briefly reviewed Commissioner Kearns' email, which opined that Underhill should be judicious about the development that should be allowed. Chair C. Seybolt then opined that she felt somewhat depressed after the joint meeting because she felt as if Underhill was not being as proactive as Jericho. However, after reflecting on the issues in more depth, she felt that they were appropriately addressing the needs of Underhill. She then advised that the Planning Commission should reflect on their role and what the people of Underhill want going forward.
- [7:35] Staff Member Strniste provided an overview of his proposal for potential Planning Commission subcommittees/focus groups. He advised that these groups would hopefully extract more production on each topic and streamline other processes. The three subcommittees would focus on: 1) zoning regulations, 2) the Town Plan, and 3) the Capital Improvement Plan and Grants. Staff Member Strniste then provided a brief synopsis of his vision for the functions that each subcommittee would carry out. Commissioner Edson expressed reservations of more work being assigned, while Commissioner Gregson advised that her time outside of the Commission's hour and half meetings was very limited and that she could not take on more work. Chair C. Seybolt recommended following this approach for at least six months to see if it works.
- [7:51] A brief discussed ensued about inviting the Energy Committee to attend a meeting to present their findings about renewable energy siting, as well as inviting the Conservation Commission to attend a meeting to present information about their various research/projects. A brief discussion ensued about the Conservation Commission's opinions on various issues such as solar power. The Commission agreed that January and February would be a good time for those two entities to attend the Planning Commission meetings.

[8:01] A quorum of Commissioners will be present on December 21, 2017.

[8:02] Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Bergersen made a motion to adjourn**, which was seconded by Commissioner Drew. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted By:

Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

The minutes of the December 7, 2017 meeting were accepted this 21st day of December, 2017.



Cynthia Seybolt, Planning Commission Chair